

ENTERED

March 05, 2025

Nathan Ochsner, Clerk

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
HOUSTON DIVISION

DARIAN WOODBRIGHT, ET AL., *on* §
behalf of themselves and all others §
similarly situated, §
§
Plaintiffs, §
§
v. § Civil Action No. 4:24-CV-04611
§ Judge Ellison
HEALTH MATCHING ACCOUNT §
SERVICES, INC., §
§
Defendant. §

AGREED CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTIVE ORDER

Before the Court is Parties' Joint Motion for a Confidentiality and Protective Order. ECF 17. The Court **GRANTS** this motion.

WHEREAS, Plaintiffs Darien Woodbright, et al. (**Plaintiffs**) and Defendant Health Matching Account Services, Inc. (**HMAS**) (collectively with Plaintiffs, the **Parties**) believe that certain information that is or will be encompassed by discovery demands by the Parties in this matter involves the production or disclosure of protected health information, other identifiable personal information, trade secrets, confidential business information, or other proprietary information that should be protected from public disclosure; and

WHEREAS, the Parties seek a protective order limiting disclosure thereof in accordance with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c);

THEREFORE, it is hereby stipulated by the Parties and **ORDERED** that:

1. Each Party may designate as confidential for protection under this Agreed Confidentiality and Protective Order (**Protective Order**), in whole or in part, any document, information or material that constitutes or includes, in whole or in part, confidential or proprietary information or trade secrets of the Party or a Non-Party to whom the Party reasonably believes it owes an obligation of confidentiality with respect to such document, information or material (**Protected Material**). Protected Material shall be designated by the Party producing it by affixing a legend or stamp on such document, information or material as follows: “CONFIDENTIAL” (in all-capitalized letters). The word “CONFIDENTIAL” shall be placed clearly on each page of the Protected Material (except deposition and hearing transcripts) for which such protection is sought. For deposition and hearing transcripts, the word “CONFIDENTIAL” shall be placed on the cover page of the transcript (if not already present on the cover page of the transcript when received from the court reporter) by each attorney receiving a copy of the transcript after that attorney receives notice of the designation of some or all of that transcript as “CONFIDENTIAL.”

2. To the extent a producing Party believes that certain Protected Material qualifying to be designated CONFIDENTIAL is so sensitive that its dissemination deserves even further limitation, including protected health information, other identifiable patient information, trade secrets, confidential business information, or other proprietary information, the producing Party

may designate such Protected Material “RESTRICTED -- ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY.”

3. With respect to documents, information or material designated “CONFIDENTIAL” or “RESTRICTED - ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY,”¹ subject to the provisions herein and unless otherwise stated, this Protective Order governs, without limitation: (a) all documents, electronically stored information, and/or things as defined by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure; (b) all pretrial, hearing or deposition testimony, or documents marked as exhibits or for identification in depositions and hearings; (c) pretrial pleadings, exhibits to pleadings and other court filings; (d) affidavits; and (e) stipulations. All copies, reproductions, extracts, digests and complete or partial summaries prepared from any DESIGNATED MATERIAL shall also be considered DESIGNATED MATERIAL and treated as such under this Protective Order.

4. A designation of Protected Material (i.e., “CONFIDENTIAL,” or “RESTRICTED -ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY,”) may be made at any time. Inadvertent or unintentional production of documents, information or material that has not been designated as DESIGNATED MATERIAL shall not be deemed a waiver in whole or in part of a claim for confidential treatment. Any party that inadvertently or unintentionally produces Protected Material

¹ The term “DESIGNATED MATERIAL” is used throughout this Protective Order to refer to the class of materials designated as “CONFIDENTIAL” or “RESTRICTED - ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY,” both individually and collectively.

without designating it as DESIGNATED MATERIAL may request destruction of that Protected Material by notifying the recipient(s), as soon as reasonably possible after the producing Party becomes aware of the inadvertent or unintentional disclosure, and providing replacement Protected Material that is properly designated. The recipient(s) shall then destroy all copies of the inadvertently or unintentionally produced Protected Materials and any documents, information or material derived from or based thereon.

5. CONFIDENTIAL documents, information and material may be disclosed only to the following persons, except upon receipt of the prior written consent of the designating party, upon order of the Court, or as set forth in Paragraph 11 below:

- (a) outside counsel of record for the Parties in this Civil Action No. 4:24-CV-04611 (the "Action");
- (b) employees of such counsel assigned to and reasonably necessary to assist such counsel in the litigation of this Action;
- (c) retained counsel for the Parties who either have responsibility for making decisions dealing directly with the litigation of this Action, or who are assisting outside counsel in the litigation of this Action provided that each such person has agreed to be bound by the provisions of this Protective Order by signing a copy of Appendix A and providing it to the producing Party. Protected Materials may not be disclosed to the so-designated representative(s) prior to the expiration of the 10 day period for objection by the producing Party as set forth in Paragraph 5(e) below. In the event the producing Party objects to the designated representative, the procedure set forth in Paragraph 5(e) for resolution of the objection shall be followed;
- (d) up to and including three (3) designated representatives of each of the Parties to the extent reasonably necessary for the litigation of this Action, provided that each such person has agreed to be bound by the provisions of this Protective Order by signing a copy of Appendix A and

providing it to the producing Party. Protected Materials may not be disclosed to the so-designated representative(s) prior to the expiration of the 10 day period for objection by the producing Party as set forth in Paragraph 5(e) below. In the event the producing Party objects to the designated representative, the procedure set forth in Paragraph 5(e) for resolution of the objection shall be followed. Either party may in good faith request the other party's consent to designate one or more additional representatives, the other party shall not unreasonably withhold such consent, and the requesting party may seek leave of Court to designate such additional representative(s) if the requesting party believes the other party has unreasonably withheld such consent;

- (e) outside consultants or experts (*i.e.*, not existing employees or affiliates of a Party or an affiliate of a Party) retained for the purpose of this litigation, provided that: (1) such consultants or experts are not presently employed by the Parties hereto for purposes other than this Action; (2) before access is given, the consultant or expert has completed the Undertaking attached as Appendix A hereto and the same is served upon the producing Party with a current curriculum vitae of the consultant or expert at least ten (10) days before access to the Protected Material is to be given to that consultant or Undertaking to object to and notify the receiving Party in writing that it objects to disclosure of Protected Material to the consultant or expert. The Parties agree to promptly confer and use good faith to resolve any such objection. If the Parties are unable to resolve any objection, the objecting Party may file a motion with the Court within fifteen (15) days of the notice, or within such other time as the Parties may agree, seeking a protective order with respect to the proposed disclosure. The objecting Party shall have the burden of proving the need for a protective order. No disclosure shall occur until all such objections are resolved by agreement or Court order;
- (f) independent litigation support services, including persons working for or as court reporters, graphics or design services, jury or trial consulting services, and photocopy, document imaging, and database services retained by counsel and reasonably necessary to assist counsel with the litigation of this Action; and
- (g) the Court and its personnel.

6. A Party shall designate documents, information or material as "CONFIDENTIAL" only upon a good faith belief that the documents, information or material contains confidential or proprietary information or

trade secrets of the Party or a Non-Party to whom the Party reasonably believes it owes an obligation of confidentiality with respect to such documents, information or material.

7. Documents, information or material produced pursuant to any discovery request in this Action, including but not limited to Protected Material designated as DESIGNATED MATERIAL, shall be used by the Parties only in the litigation of this Action and shall not be used for any other purpose. Any person or entity who obtains access to DESIGNATED MATERIAL or the contents thereof pursuant to this Protective Order shall not make any copies, duplicates, extracts, summaries or descriptions of such DESIGNATED MATERIAL or any portion thereof except as may be reasonably necessary in the litigation of this Action. Any such copies, duplicates, extracts, summaries or descriptions shall be classified DESIGNATED MATERIAL and subject to all of the terms and conditions of this Protective Order.

8. For Protected Material designated RESTRICTED -- ATTORNEYS' EYES ONLY, access to, and disclosure of, such Protected Material shall be limited to individuals listed in Paragraph 5(a-b) and (e-g), provided however that nothing shall prohibit the lawful owner of such information from having lawful access to its own Protected Material.

9. Nothing in this Protective Order shall require production of documents, information or other material that a Party contends is protected from disclosure by the attorney-client privilege, the work product doctrine, or

other privilege, doctrine, or immunity. If documents, information or other material subject to a claim of attorney-client privilege, work product doctrine, or other privilege, doctrine, or immunity is inadvertently or unintentionally produced, such production shall in no way prejudice or otherwise constitute a waiver of, or estoppel as to, any such privilege, doctrine, or immunity. Any Party that inadvertently or unintentionally produces documents, information or other material it reasonably believes are protected under the attorney-client privilege, work product doctrine, or other privilege, doctrine, or immunity may obtain the return of such documents, information or other material by promptly notifying the recipient(s) and providing a privilege log for the inadvertently or unintentionally produced documents, information or other material. The recipient(s) shall gather and return all copies of such documents, information or other material to the producing Party, except for any pages containing privileged or otherwise protected markings by the recipient(s), which pages shall instead be destroyed and certified as such to the producing Party.

10. There shall be no disclosure of any DESIGNATED MATERIAL by any person authorized to have access thereto to any person who is not authorized for such access under this Protective Order. The Parties are hereby ORDERED to safeguard all such documents, information and material to protect against disclosure to any unauthorized persons or entities. The recipient of any DESIGNATED MATERIAL shall maintain such information

in a secure and safe area and shall exercise the same standard of due and proper care with respect to the storage, custody, use and/or dissemination of such information as is exercised by the recipient with respect to its own proprietary information.

11. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to prejudice any Party's right to use any DESIGNATED MATERIAL in taking testimony at any deposition or hearing provided that the DESIGNATED MATERIAL is only disclosed to a person(s) who is: (i) eligible to have access to the DESIGNATED MATERIAL by virtue of his or her employment with the designating party pursuant to the terms of this Protective Order, (ii) identified in the DESIGNATED MATERIAL as an author, addressee, or copy recipient of such information, (iii) although not identified as an author, addressee, or copy recipient of such DESIGNATED MATERIAL, has, in the ordinary course of business, seen such DESIGNATED MATERIAL, (iv) a current or former officer, director or employee of the producing Party or a current or former officer, director or employee of a company affiliated with the producing Party; (v) counsel for a Party, including outside counsel and in-house counsel; (vi) an independent contractor, consultant, and/or expert retained for the purpose of this litigation; (vii) court reporters and videographers; (viii) the Court; or (ix) other persons entitled hereunder to access to DESIGNATED MATERIAL. DESIGNATED MATERIAL shall not be disclosed to any other persons unless prior authorization is obtained from counsel representing the producing Party.

or from the Court.

12. Parties (and any interested Non-Parties who have agreed to be bound to this Protective Order pursuant to Paragraph 17 below) may, at the deposition or hearing or within thirty (30) days after receipt of a deposition or hearing transcript, designate the deposition or hearing transcript or any portion thereof as “CONFIDENTIAL,” or “RESTRICTED -- ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY” pursuant to this Protective Order. Access to the deposition or hearing transcript so designated shall be limited in accordance with the terms of this Protective Order. Until expiration of the 30-day period, the entire deposition or hearing transcript shall be treated as CONFIDENTIAL.

13. Any DESIGNATED MATERIAL that is filed with the Court shall be filed under seal and shall remain under seal until further order of the Court. The filing party shall be responsible for informing the Clerk of the Court that the filing should be sealed and for placing the legend “FILED UNDER SEAL PURSUANT TO PROTECTIVE ORDER” above the caption and conspicuously on each page of the filing. Exhibits to a filing shall conform to the labeling requirements set forth in this Protective Order. If a pretrial pleading filed with the Court, or an exhibit thereto, discloses or relies on confidential documents, information or material, such confidential portions shall be redacted to the extent necessary and the pleading or exhibit filed publicly with the Court.

14. The Protective Order applies to pretrial discovery. Nothing in this Protective Order shall be deemed to prevent the Parties from introducing

any DESIGNATED MATERIAL into evidence at the trial of this Action, or from using any information contained in DESIGNATED MATERIAL at the trial of this Action, subject to any pretrial order issued by this Court.

15. A Party may request in writing to the other Party that the designation given to any DESIGNATED MATERIAL be modified or withdrawn. If the designating Party does not agree to redesignation within ten (10) days of receipt of the written request, the requesting Party may apply to the Court for relief. Upon any such application to the Court, the burden shall be on the designating Party to show why its classification is proper. Such application shall be treated procedurally as a motion to compel pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 37, subject to the Rule's provisions relating to sanctions. In making such application, the requirements of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the Local Rules of the Court shall be met. Pending the Court's determination of the application, the designation of the designating Party shall be maintained.

16. Each outside consultant or expert to whom DESIGNATED MATERIAL is disclosed in accordance with the terms of this Protective Order shall be advised by counsel of the terms of this Protective Order, shall be informed that he or she is subject to the terms and conditions of this Protective Order, and shall sign an acknowledgment that he or she has received a copy of, has read, and has agreed to be bound by this Protective Order. A copy of the acknowledgment form is attached as Appendix A.

17. To the extent that any discovery is taken of persons who are not Parties to this Action (“Non-Parties”) and in the event that such Non-Parties contend the discovery sought involves protected health information, other identifiable patient information, trade secrets, confidential business information, or other proprietary information, then such Non-Parties may agree to be bound by this Protective Order.

18. DESIGNATED MATERIAL shall be used by the parties in this Action solely for the purposes of this Action, and not for any other purpose whatsoever. Within thirty (30) days of final termination of this Action, including any appeals, all DESIGNATED MATERIAL, including all copies, duplicates, abstracts, indexes, summaries, descriptions, and excerpts or extracts thereof (excluding excerpts or extracts incorporated into any privileged memoranda of the Parties and materials which have been admitted into evidence in this Action), shall at the producing Party’s election either be returned to the producing Party or be destroyed. The receiving Party shall verify the return or destruction by affidavit furnished to the producing Party, upon the producing Party’s request. Notwithstanding any of the foregoing, outside litigation counsel shall be entitled to keep their copies of any pleadings or other papers filed or used during the Action consistent with their law firm’s document retention policies.

19. The failure to designate documents, information or material in accordance with this Protective Order and the failure to object to a designation

at a given time shall not preclude the filing of a motion at a later date seeking to impose such designation or challenging the propriety thereof. The entry of this Protective Order and/or the production of documents, information and material hereunder shall in no way constitute a waiver of any objection to the furnishing thereof, all such objections being hereby preserved.

20. Any Party knowing or believing that any other party is in violation of or intends to violate this Protective Order and has raised the question of violation or potential violation with the opposing party and has been unable to resolve the matter by agreement may move the Court for such relief as may be appropriate in the circumstances. Pending disposition of the motion by the Court, the Party alleged to be in violation of or intending to violate this Protective Order shall discontinue the performance of and/or shall not undertake the further performance of any action alleged to constitute a violation of this Protective Order.

21. Production of DESIGNATED MATERIAL by each of the Parties shall not be deemed a publication of the documents, information and material (or the contents thereof) produced so as to void or make voidable whatever claim the Parties may have as to the proprietary and confidential nature of the documents, information or other material or its contents.

22. Nothing in this Protective Order shall be construed to effect an abrogation, waiver or limitation of any kind on the rights of each of the Parties to assert any applicable discovery or trial privilege.

23. Each of the Parties shall also retain the right to file a motion with the Court (a) to modify this Protective Order to allow disclosure of DESIGNATED MATERIAL to additional persons or entities if reasonably necessary to prepare and present this Action and (b) to apply for additional protection of DESIGNATED MATERIAL.

24. Until the Court has signed this Protective Order, the Parties agree to treat it as a stipulated agreement, similar to an agreement made pursuant to Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 11.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

SIGNED at Houston, Texas, on this the 5th day of March 2025.



KEITH P. ELLISON
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
HOUSTON DIVISION

DARIAN WOODBRIGHT, ET AL., *on* §
behalf of themselves and all others §
similarly situated, §
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Plaintiffs, §
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v. § Civil Action No. 4:24-CV-04611
§ Judge Ellison
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APPENDIX A
UNDERTAKING OF EXPERTS OR CONSULTANTS REGARDING
PROTECTIVE ORDER

I, _____, declare that:

1. My address is _____.
My current employer is _____.
My current occupation is _____.
2. I have received a copy of the Protective Order in this action. I have carefully read and understand the provisions of the Protective Order.
3. I will comply with all of the provisions of the Protective Order. I will hold in confidence, will not disclose to anyone not qualified under the Protective Order, and will use only for purposes of this action any information designated as "CONFIDENTIAL," or "RESTRICTED -- ATTORNEYS' EYES ONLY," that is disclosed to me. I shall maintain such information in a secure and safe area

and shall exercise the same standard of due and proper care with respect to the storage, custody, use and/or dissemination of such information as is exercised by me with respect to my own proprietary information.

4. Promptly upon termination of these actions, I will return all documents and things designated as "CONFIDENTIAL," or "RESTRICTED -- ATTORNEYS' EYES ONLY," that came into my possession, and all documents and things that I have prepared relating thereto, to the outside counsel for the party by whom I am employed. I will verify such return or destruction by affidavit furnished to the producing Party, upon the producing Party's request.
5. I hereby submit to the jurisdiction of this Court for the purpose of enforcement of the Protective Order in this action.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signature _____

Date _____